

9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Consultation – Friday Afternoon**

Since September, pupils have been dismissed at 1:30pm on Fridays in order that staff can take part in weekly training opportunities. Governors and school leadership are in the process of analysing the impact of this approach to staff training, which we introduced eight months ago and we would like to share the following information with you:

- 161 training sessions have been completed by staff
- Several sessions are held each week (never less than four sessions at one time)
- All Teachers and Teaching Assistants take part in training every week
- The majority of the training has been pathway specific (targeted for staff in either the Engage, Explore or Enquire pathways or training specific for Early Years)
- Some of the training has been targeted for specific needs, for example, approaches for supporting pupils with hearing impairments or mobility training for pupils with visual impairments
- Some training has been universal (training all staff require)
- 80% of these sessions have been face to face training sessions
- 20% of the training sessions have been via webinars or online
- Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive with the staff stating an increase in confidence, skills and knowledge

In addition, we have found that with this approach we are able to:

- Respond swiftly to particular needs of individual pupils as they arise, for example, newly identified sensory, behavioural or medical needs
- Respond almost immediately to whole school issues, for example, improve our practice to better support pupils as they transition around the school
- Respond more effectively to the pupil voice, for example, responding with staff training to concerns that pupils raise
- Ensure consistency of high quality of training for all staff on a scale that we have not been able to achieve in the past
- Offer a range of vital medical training that we would not have been able to offer otherwise
- Provide professional development in a much more cost-effective manner
- Invest in staff so that they can train colleagues within school
- Ensure reliable and consistent training programmes across the entire academic year including for new staff who join at different points of the school year

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The original idea behind this initiative was to ensure our staff continually receive the necessary professional development to meet the needs of all pupils in terms of their health, safety, wellbeing and education. It is worthy to note that our pupil population has increased by 93% and our staff population has increased by over 100% in the past 10 years therefore providing sufficient training has become an increased challenge. This is a similar approach used in numerous other Kent special schools and in schools nationally as it is not possible to meet essential staff training needs solely in the allocated professional days in the school calendar.

As part of our review, we would like to hear from you and would ask that you complete our online survey, <https://forms.office.com/e/MZmjn1ExQd> or request a paper version of the survey via the school office tel.01795 477788 or [office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk).

The online survey and paper version will close on 15th May 2023 at 3.00pm.

Governors and the leadership team will review feedback from pupils, parents, carers and staff, including the nursing team who have provided a wealth of training, in order to determine the effectiveness of this new approach. Impact reports from our Deputy Principal who leads on professional development will be reviewed and reports from the Acting Principal on the impact on teaching and learning will also be assessed. We will then be able to consider ways forward with the aim of ensuring that our programme of professional development for staff supports top quality provision for all of our pupils.

Yours faithfully



Jill Palmer  
Executive Principal



Roberta Kane  
Chair of Governors